

# Hardship Support Fund 2017/18:

## Guidance Notes

### A. What is the Hardship Support Fund?

A.1. The Hardship Support Fund provides financial support to help you access and remain in Higher Education, It can help alleviate unexpected financial hardship during this period. Hardship Fund payments can be used to help with course-related costs such as childcare; books; materials; travel and general living costs, such as rent, food, and utility costs.

A.2. Payments can also be used to meet exceptional costs, such as repairs to essential household equipment, assistance with reasonable priority debts, and other emergency situations which arise.

A.3. The fund is not designed to meet the cost of tuition fees nor unreasonable and foreseeable debts. You will need to explain any of the above reasons in your personal statement.

A.4. An award from the fund is not an entitlement. Awards from the fund are made in cases of extreme hardship only. Students are therefore encouraged not to rely on the Fund as an alternative source of annual income. You should therefore seek alternative sources of income, as an award is not guaranteed.

A.5. Please note that you will speed up the application process by completing all of the form clearly and accurately and by submitting all your supporting evidence,

**Important - please pay particular attention to the text printed in red.**

### B. Who Can Apply?

B.1. You can apply if you are a 'home' student on:

B.2. A enrolled Undergraduate course, full-time or part-time, including a degree course, foundation degree, sandwich course, HND or HNC or

B.3. A enrolled Postgraduate course, full-time or part-time. If you are self-funded you are expected to have made adequate and realistic provision at the start of the course to cover your tuition fees and living costs. Where you have clearly not done so, a payment from the Fund will not be made.

B.4. A "Home" student is defined as a student with unrestricted right to remain in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of his or her course, and who is not here primarily for educational purposes. This will have been assessed when you enrolled. You must fulfil this condition.

B.5. Undergraduate, PGCE & Professional Diploma in Architecture students **must be in receipt of the full means tested student support funding from Student Finance England (SFE)** (i.e. you are in receipt of a student loan), and must take out your maximum student loan entitlement and tuition fee loan to be eligible for the Hardship Support Fund.

B.6. If you are not eligible to apply to SFE (for residency reasons), or chose not to do so, you will not be eligible to apply to the Hardship Support Fund.

B.7. International and EU students who are not eligible for SFE support, or do not meet residency requirements cannot apply to the Hardship Support Fund. Asylum Seekers are also not eligible to apply.

B.8. If you are ineligible for student funding due to previous study/ELQ rules, you can be considered for the Hardship Support Fund. However you are not considered as a priority within the guidance and therefore may only be considered at the end of the year, **funds permitting**. You should also have made adequate provision for living costs and payment of tuition fees. You must provide proof of this as well as your refusal on the grounds stated above from your SFE.

B.9. New Part-time students must be studying at least 25% of a full-time course (at least 30 credits) and continuing part-time students must be studying at least 50% of a full-time course in order to apply (at least 60 credits).

B.10. Students with a disability who apply for the hardship Fund must be studying at least 25% of a full-time course (at least 30 credits over the academic year).

B.11. All part-time undergraduate students are required to apply to SFE for the statutory student support before applying for the Hardship Support Fund.

B.12 Students attending 'partnership' colleges are not eligible to apply, and must contact their college for support.

## C. Completing an Application

### Part 1: Your Personal Details

C.1.1. Please complete all sections of Part 1 and tick the boxes that apply to you. Incomplete information may mean that your application cannot be assessed.

### Part 2: Your Course Details

C.2.1. Please provide details of the course you are studying, based on the 17/18 academic year. Please tick whether you are studying full time or part time.

C.2.2. If you are an Undergraduate student studying 90 to 120 (+) credits or you are repeating a year of a full time course, you are considered to be full time.

C.2.3. If you are studying less than 90 credits, or 90 credits and you were part-time last academic year, you are considered to be part time.

C.2.4. Please note that in order to be eligible for the Hardship Fund you must be studying at least 30 credits over the academic year or if you have a disability at least 15 credits in a term.

C.2.5. If you are a Postgraduate student you must have paid all your fees and be enrolled on a full-time or part-time course.

### **Part 3: Income and Expenditure**

C.3.1. Please complete both the income and expenditure sections, including your partner's income (or partner's benefit entitlement) and any debts (if applicable). Bank account overdrafts are not classed as debt.

C.3.2. When entering your own or your partner's 'net earnings', please note that 'net' means the amount earned after all tax and other deductions have been made.

C.3.3. Please note that the figures provided should be per week. Therefore you should divide any student support amounts by 52 (e.g. divide your full yearly student loan amount by 52 to come up with a weekly figure).

C.3.4. If bills are paid on a quarterly basis, multiply the quarterly amount by 4 and divide this amount by 52 which will result in a weekly amount.

C.3.5. Any figures per calendar month, multiply the amount by 12 then divide by 52 to come up with the weekly amount.

C.3.6. Any debts should be entered as total amount owed.

C.3.7. All amounts should be as accurate as possible.

C.3.8. Please total each column at the end.

C.3.9. We will only consider private vehicle costs if they are essential.

### **Part 4: Your Bank Details – Important**

C.4.1. Check the status of the account first and read the disclaimer. Please provide the name of your bank, the account number and sort code for the account into which we should pay an award, should your application be successful – **Provide evidence of all bank accounts.**

### **Part 5: Declaration**

C.5.1. Please read, sign and date the declaration before submitting the form. If the declaration is not signed, your application will not be processed.

### **Part 6: Document Checklist**

C.6.1. Please use the document checklist before submitting your form. You need to provide a personal statement explaining what your current financial situation is and the reasons why you are applying to the Fund. A typed personal statement is preferred. - **In order to speed up the checking of your application, please ensure that documents submitted are collated in the order as listed in section 7 Document Checklist. Personal Statement, Evidence of Rent/Mortgage, Bank statements etc**

C.6.2. Evidence of rent can be in the form of a Tenancy Agreement or a letter signed by your landlord (or parent, if s/he is making a contribution to your rent) confirming how much rent is paid. If you have a mortgage, you must provide a mortgage statement.

C.6.3. You must also provide bank statements for all bank accounts held and these must be dated for the last 3 months. Underline all amounts over £100, and **explain** what the payment is for. All the other documents shown on the checklist will vary depending on course and circumstances. If you do not provide all necessary documentation, we cannot process your application.

C.6.5. Please note: all documents submitted must be genuine photocopies of original documents.

**C.6.6. Due to a reduction in central government funding, awards paid this year may be lower than in previous years. If you received an award in a previous year, you are not guaranteed an award of any or equal, amount this year.**

## D. Submitting Your Application

D.1. Once you have photocopied and attached all documents to your completed form, please submit it to your Student HUB. **HUB Staff will check you your application form and all attached documents** to ensure an accurate and prompt decision. Please allow up to 30 minutes for this.

D.2. **HUB staff will not accept application forms without ALL photocopied Documents.**

D.3. You will be sent an email as confirmation of your receipt. Please retain this as proof of submission.

D.4. We aim to assess applications within 4 weeks of submission, although this could be longer during busy periods. You will be informed of the outcome of your application via email.

**D.5. The Fund will close on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 12:00 or if the funds are exhausted before this date. Any incomplete forms or forms without all the documents after the closing date will not be assessed, and will be deemed ineligible.**

**D.6 Forms and/or documentary evidence will not, under any circumstances, be processed or returned after the Fund has closed.**

**D.7 Final Year students must make an application with all supporting documents by the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, applications will not be considered after this date.**

## E. Assessment & Payment Details

E.1. Assessments are carried out by the Hardship Assessment Committee, following a formula prescribed by Central Government (BIS).

E.2. Applications will be treated either as 'standard' or 'non-standard'. The Assessment Committee will assess 'standard' applications under an 'additional needs' method, which considers the difference between reasonable expenditure and expected income. Your application will be treated as 'non-standard' if you have unforeseen circumstances, that may require emergency financial help, or priority debts.

E.3. Your application may take up to 4 weeks to process and pay (if you are eligible). Please do not contact your HUB to make enquiries within this 4 week period.

E.4 Awards will be split into 2 payments and can only be made to students who are in attendance and engaging in their studies and their assessments. Awards will not be made if students do not demonstrate 'adequate engagement' with their course, in respect of:

- Attendance at classes (minimum of 50% attendance rate) and
- Where relevant, engagement with assessments.

The first payment will be made within the 4 weeks of submission date, and 2<sup>nd</sup> payment due to be paid around the Easter period.

## F. Review

F.1. Reviews are carried out by a member of staff who is independent of the initial assessment. Students are advised that rigorous procedures are followed in the assessment of applications and cross checks are made to ensure fair and consistent practice. A 'request for review' can therefore be made only in exceptional circumstances and only on the grounds that your application was not assessed in accordance with: (a) the University Hardship Fund Policy, (b) Central Government guidelines, issued by BIS and (c) the agreed assessment procedures. You **cannot** request a review on the following grounds alone:

F.2. You are dissatisfied that you have not received an award.

F.3. You are dissatisfied with the amount awarded

F.4. You are not satisfied with the reason given for your refusal

F.5. You received an award before / in a previous year and believe you are entitled to another award.

**F.6. Your request for review must be made within 5 working days of receiving notification of your assessment outcome.**

F.7. If you have grounds to request a review, please complete the 'Review Request Form' (see end of this document) and send it to: **Hardship Fund Review, c/o Your HUB**. You will receive the outcome of the review in writing, within ten working days of the receipt of your request.

F.8. Please note: (a) the final decision lies with the Reviewer and is not open to discussion nor negotiation and (b) the Reviewer cannot deal with queries about the fund nor deal with reviews by email or telephone.

## G. Contact Details

G.1. If you have any queries regarding your application after submission, or you require further information to make an application, please contact your HUB Office.

G.2. Your application will take at **least 4 weeks to process**. If after 4 weeks you have not received a decision, or you have not been contacted for more information, please contact the HUB, who will raise your query with the Assessment Committee.

G.3 Applications cannot be Fast Tracked through your Student Hub.

## H. Resubmission

H.1. A student who has been refused an award from the Hardship Fund and whose circumstances subsequently change, may resubmit his/her application along with additional evidence for assessment. The normal submission process outlined above should be followed.

University Hardship Fund  
**Application For Review**

|  |  |                                |           |                                     |           |    |    |    |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----|----|----|
| <b>Your Name</b>                           |  | <b>School</b><br>Please circle | Buss      | C&DM                                | CASS      | HS | SP | SS |
| <b>ID Number</b>                           |  | <b>Course Title</b>            |           |                                     |           |    |    |    |
| <b>Date of Birth</b>                       |  | <b>Year of Study</b>           |           | <b>Study Level</b><br>Please circle | UG        | PG |    |    |
| <b>Date When Application Was Submitted</b> |  | <b>Status</b><br>Please circle | Full Time | Part Time                           | Placement |    |    |    |

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| <p>1. Please state which policy, guideline or procedure you believe has not been followed.</p>  |
| <p>2. <b>Reasons for Requesting a Review</b> - In the space below, please outline your reasons for requesting a review, making reference to the points outlined in the <b>Guidance Notes (Section F)</b>. You can attach this sheet to a typed explanation but if you hand write it, it is important that you write clearly and give all the necessary information. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.</p> |

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If you re submitting any additional evidence, please list in the space below:

**Please return this completed form to your Hub marked either: "Hardship Fund Review"**